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PRE-PROPOSAL CONFERENCE

TED WEISS FEDERAL BUILDING

290 Broadway

New York, New York

AFRICAN BURIAL GROUND INTERPRETIVE CENTER,

NEW YORK, NEW YORK

Reported by:
NICOLE AMENEIROS, RPR
JOB NO. 183536B
(TIME: 7:14 p.m.)

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MS. MORRISON: Thank you for coming out this evening and for your interest in the African Burial Grounds.

My name is Tara Morrison, and I am the project manager for the National Park Service component of the African Burial Ground effort. We're here today to provide information on the development of the Interpretive Center and to answer questions that you might have on the request for proposals for the Interpretive Center.

This meeting, and you'll see here, will be recorded and transcribed by a court reporter, and the meeting notes will be posted on the IDEAS NBC website and also on the GSA website for the African Burial Ground, which is www.africanburialground.gov.

I will provide a brief overview of the project. Kim Strite and David Thomas will then provide a synopsis of the two requests for proposals, and I will conclude the presentation with an

1
2 overview of the process and opportunity
3 for public input. A question and answer
4 period will follow and conclude the
5 meeting.

6 Before I move on, when we get to
7 the question and answers, depending on
8 the questions, you might have a response
9 for someone other than the three of us,
10 so I'd like to introduce the other
11 National Park Service staff who are here
12 today. We have David Aitken, who is
13 from the Denver Service Center and is a
14 chief of design and construction.

15 MR. AITKEN: Correct.

16 MS. MORRISON: Linda Moery, also
17 from the Denver Sever ([Service](#)) Center, who is the
18 project manager for the architectural
19 build out portion of the process; Lisa
20 Royse in the back who is the project
21 manager for the Interpretive Media
22 component; and Krista Kovach, also
23 working with the Interpretive Media
24 component of the project.

25 Did I get everybody?

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Okay. As you may know, the African Burial Ground is a 17th and 18th century burial ground here in lower Manhattan and was the site of between 10 to 20,000 free and enslaved Africans. The burial grounds is approximately seven acres in size bounded by Broadway, Centre, Duane and Chamber Streets and was designated a National Historic Landmark in 1993.

On February 27th of this year the memorial site of the African Burial Ground was designated a National Monument by President Bush.

Although we'll not provide detailed history here tonight, there is information, the bookmarks that you saw out on the sign-in table, that detail the services and the hours offered by the Office of Public Education and Interpretation.

And just at the end of February the temporary Interpretive Center opened, which is in the area of the first floor of this building. So if you hadn't had

1
2 an opportunity to visit that site I
3 would encourage you do so. It's a great
4 space, and you could get more
5 information and learn more about the
6 project.

7 The African Burial Ground, as you
8 know, is a most significant and
9 historical and archeological site and
10 has garnered the attention of many in
11 the African descendant community, many
12 concerned citizens in New York and
13 abroad, as well as many scholars.

14 Since the time of the rediscovery
15 many efforts have informed our
16 understanding of the African Burial
17 Ground.

18 In 1993 the Federal Steering
19 Committee presented seven
20 recommendations on how the African
21 Burial Ground should be commemorated.
22 Among the seven was a recommendation for
23 a world class museum. The Memorandum of
24 Agreement as amended between the General
25 Services Administration, New York City

1
2 Landmark Preservation Commission and
3 Advisory Counsel on Historic
4 Preservation stated that GSA would
5 provide for site interpretation among
6 other actions and recommendations --
7 responsibilities. I'm sorry.

8 GSA completed a design competition
9 for the Interpretive Center in 290
10 Broadway and awarded a contract to IDI
11 Construction. Although that contract is
12 no longer in place, the data and vision
13 for the Interpretive Center is still
14 available. The work of the subject
15 experts provided an understanding of the
16 vision for the Interpretive Center. In
17 addition, many people participated in a
18 survey regarding their thoughts on what
19 the Interpretive Center should provide
20 and focus on.

21 During 2004 and 2005 the National
22 Park Service reviewed the work that had
23 been done in the past, including the
24 survey that was completed by many, met
25 with members of the public and the

1
2 scholarly community that had been
3 involved in the process and conducted a
4 series of meetings and workshops with
5 project researchers who prepared the
6 three reports as well as discussed the
7 visitor experience with the staff of the
8 Office of Public Education and
9 Interpretation.

10 In the fall of 2005 the National
11 Park Service released the draft
12 management recommendations for the
13 African Burial Ground. Preparation of
14 this report was one of the National Park
15 Service responsibilities under the
16 Interagency Agreement with GSA.

17 That plan also included an
18 abbreviated long-range interpretive
19 plan. That plan was informed not only
20 by the public meetings at the National
21 Park Service conducted in 2004 but the
22 input that had been provided over the
23 years since the rediscovery. And I saw
24 quite a few people had their copy of the
25 management plan. So you might be

1
2 familiar with some of the information
3 I'll share now.

4 But the suggested themes in that
5 draft management plan were:

6 One. The rediscovery of the
7 burials reshapes history. The
8 rediscovery of the African Burial Ground
9 demands that history be retold and
10 forever altered by a more complete
11 understanding of the African Diaspora,
12 the scope of efforts to enslave
13 Africans, the nature of resistance to
14 dehumanization, and the role of Africans
15 and Americans of African descent in
16 building New York and shaping its
17 culture.

18 Two. The Struggle For Human
19 Rights. The African Burial Ground
20 demonstrated how individuals, singly and
21 collectively, can create lives that
22 transcend the inhumanity of forced
23 immigration and enslavement, the burdens
24 of the harshest labor and repression of
25 cherished cultural and societal

1
2 practices.

3 And, three. Treatment of sacred
4 sites Sankofa and scholarship. Guided
5 by the spirit of Sankofa efforts to
6 preserve, study and commemorate African
7 Burial Ground has triggered activism and
8 dialogue on the treatment of sacred
9 sites, ancestral remains and sites of
10 conscience in New York City and around
11 the world.

12 The draft plan also included a
13 mission statement -- a suggested mission
14 statement for the African Burial Ground
15 and can be applied to the Interpretive
16 Center and related programming or
17 visitor services.

18 (Discussion off the record.)

19 MS. MORRISON: Thank you. Sorry
20 about that.

21 So the draft plan also included a
22 suggested mission statement for the
23 African Burial Grounds and can be
24 applied to the Interpretive Center and
25 related programming or visitor services.

1
2 This section providing -- this section
3 on providing knowledge states in part:

4 Multidisciplinary activities
5 related to African Burial Grounds will
6 heighten understanding, increase
7 dialogue, re-educate society and
8 publically acknowledge the importance of
9 a variety of subjects, including the
10 history of enslavement of Africans, the
11 lives and circumstances of early
12 Africans and African Americans in New
13 York City, history of northern slavery
14 and the denial of human freedom in New
15 York, resistance to the inhumanity and
16 brutality of enslavement and the
17 struggle of today's community activists
18 to preserve, protect, and remembering
19 the African Burial Ground and those
20 interred there.

21 The draft plan was available for
22 public comment last fall, and the final
23 report is currently being prepared and
24 will be available this summer. The
25 draft plan is currently available at the

1
2 Office of Public Education and
3 Interpretation, again, on the first
4 floor of this building.

5 And we have the opportunity now to
6 inform the process to think big. As the
7 announcement for this meeting stated,
8 the African Burial Ground facilities
9 worthy of the magnitude of the African
10 Burial Ground's importance must be
11 capable of accommodating the
12 intellectual and physical needs of all
13 who seek an understanding of the site,
14 its history, the people interred there,
15 the times in which they lived and the
16 burial ground's continuing relevance to
17 today's society.

18 The Interpretive Center will be
19 visited by school children,
20 international tourists, native New
21 Yorkers and others. The charge is huge
22 but extremely important as it will be
23 the space that stimulates widespread
24 understanding and appreciation of the
25 African Burial Ground's historic and

1
2 social significance to all who may
3 visit.

4 The National Park Service has two
5 parallel processes (1) the architectural
6 build out; and (2) the development of
7 the interpretive media. The two will be
8 fully integrated during the development
9 of the Interpretive Center. David
10 Thomas will speak to the architectural
11 build out and will be followed by Kim
12 Strite who will speak to the
13 interpretive media.

14 MR. THOMAS: Good evening.

15 AUDIENCE: Good evening. I'm Dave
16 Thomas of the National Park Service, the
17 Denver Service Center Office, and I am
18 the contracting officer on the
19 architectural and engineering design for
20 the Interpretive Center, the African
21 Burial Interpretive Center.

22 I'll give you a brief overview of
23 their pre-solicitation notice
24 submissions that are being submitted in
25 response to that notice and a little bit

1
2 on the selection process.

3 But before I go farther, I have to
4 give you the disclaimer that any
5 statements or representations that are
6 made here in this public meeting slash
7 pre-performance conference are for
8 informational purposes only. They are
9 -- any representations or statements in
10 this meeting will be for informational
11 purposes only.

12 In order for -- to change the
13 pre-solicitation notice or the RFP that
14 Kim Strite has there has to be an
15 official amendment, and anything that
16 comes out of here that needs to be
17 changed we'll issue an amendment on it.

18 The purpose of the conference --
19 pre-proposal conference portion of this
20 meeting is to explain the requirements
21 and answer questions for complex
22 contract requirements before offerors
23 develop their proposals. In this way
24 the offerors understanding of the
25 government requirements can be improved.

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This will allow them to judge how they
can best satisfy the government
requirements and increase the efficiency
of their proposal preparations. I won't
go over background. Ms. Morrison kind
of covered the background of the
project.

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This project is a total -- for the
architectural and engineering and also
the Interpretive Center or interpretive
portion of it are total small business
set asides. To be considered as a small
business for the architectural and
engineering portion of the project, and
it falls under the North American
Industry Classification Code of 541330,
which is architectural and engineering
firms, a firm over the past -- past
three years averaged annual receipts has
to be no greater than \$4.5 million.

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For this portion of the contract
the selection will be -- the selected
firm will be predominantly an
architectural engineering firm. In

1
2 order to be considered for the award the
3 firm has to be licensed -- the firm and
4 any of its subconsultants has to be
5 licensed in the State of New York to be
6 considered for the award.

7 The pre-solicitation also states
8 that the AE firm selected will be
9 required to work closely with the
10 exhibits firm, which is the RFP that Kim
11 Strite will cover.

12 They will work closely to
13 installing the exhibits, create a place
14 for the exhibits in the -- not to exceed
15 8,780 square feet of the first floor of
16 this building.

17 The pre-solicitation notice also
18 gives a list of services that are
19 expected to be provided on the contract,
20 and it also gives a list of the
21 disciplines for that contract. And I'd
22 like to make sure that any of the SF
23 forms 330 that are submitted they need
24 to make sure they include all of the
25 disciplines in that are requested. A

1
2 firm cannot be expected to submit those
3 disciplines later as evaluation of their
4 submissions will be based on the team
5 that they submit because a firm cannot
6 perform the required services without
7 the proper disciplines. The firms may
8 not be considered for award without
9 those disciplines included in their
10 submissions.

11 The pre-solicitation notice also
12 included a draft schedule for the
13 project, which is an aggressive
14 schedule. So we just want to point that
15 out to any contractors that are
16 proposing that there is an aggressive
17 schedule.

18 And the contract is going to go
19 over several -- a few fiscal years, and
20 we just want to make sure that the teams
21 that they submit with their SF form
22 330's have there team throughout the
23 life of the contract.

24 The technical evaluation factors
25 are also included in the

1
2 pre-solicitation notice, and they are
3 listed in descending order of
4 importance. The notice states that the
5 offerors should submit a letter of
6 interest. The completed form SF 330 and
7 an organizational chart of the team that
8 they have and those submissions will be
9 evaluated by an evaluation board. The
10 members appointed to the board
11 collectively have experience in
12 architecture, engineering, construction
13 and government related acquisition
14 matters. And one member of the board
15 will be designated as the chairman of
16 the board.

17 The board will be reviewing the
18 firms in accordance with the established
19 selection criteria. The selection
20 criteria for the offerors of submission
21 is the SF 330, the organizational chart
22 and any additional supporting material
23 to substantiate the relevant project
24 work described in the SF 330, not to
25 exceed 20 double-sided pages.

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That information will be used to evaluate the firm and to include to check their past performance or any evaluation they had on previous contracts, any additional data that the agency might request from the firm, and we'll be holding interviews with the most highly qualified firms and their references.

The government will hold discussions with at least three of the most highly qualified firms. And I don't know if you know that better by the short list, but there at least three of the most highly qualified firms will hold discussions with.

The selection of at least three of the most highly qualified firms is based on the demonstrated competency, professional qualifications according to the specific criteria published in the announcement.

And the Brooks Act then requires that negotiation of a contract at a fair

1
2 and reasonable price starting with the
3 most highly qualified firm, and if we're
4 not able to reach a fair and reasonable
5 price with that -- with the most highly
6 qualified firm, we'll announce that
7 we're moving to the next firm. But we
8 don't expect that to happen.

9 I also wanted to go over the
10 schedule for award of the contract. The
11 original published notice was February
12 27th, and it had the submissions due on
13 March 29th. But we amended that
14 solicitation to include this public
15 meeting, and we also changed the
16 submission date to May 5th.

17 So all submissions in response to
18 that solicitation notice are due in the
19 Denver Service Center office no later
20 than 4:00 p.m. Mountain Time on the 5th
21 of May. The most highly qualified firms
22 or the short list will be selected --
23 can you hear me?

24 AUDIENCE: No.

25 MR. THOMAS: I'm sorry. Will be

1
2 selected by May 11th and will hold
3 interviews with those most highly
4 qualified firms during the week of May
5 22nd through the 26th of May, and we
6 expect to make award on that
7 architectural engineering portion of the
8 contract on June 21st.

9 And I'll now turn it over to Kim
10 who will cover the interpretive portion
11 of the contract.

12 MS. STRITE: Good evening.

13 AUDIENCE: Good evening.

14 MS. STRITE: Can you all hear me
15 okay? I have a loud voice.

16 I'd like to echo Ms. Morrison's and
17 Mr. Thomas' comments and say thank you
18 for being here and being interested in
19 the project.

20 My name is Kim Strite. I'm a
21 contractual specialist with the Hart ([Harpers Ferry](#))
22 Center, National Park Service. I'm here
23 today to talk about the request for
24 proposal for the interpretive media for
25 the African Burial Grounds Interpretive

1
2 Center. This is for the planning,
3 design development, fabrication
4 installation of interpretive media for
5 the African Burial Grounds. This
6 solicitation was issued on February the
7 28th for these items, and we too had it
8 coming in in late April. It has been
9 since amended for the proposals to now
10 come in on May 4th.

11 As part of the solicitation process
12 contractors are required to prepare and
13 submit proposals for evaluation, and the
14 evaluation will be made in accordance
15 with the evaluation criteria that's
16 outlined within the solicitation. The
17 evaluation criteria includes past
18 performance; comprehensive plan,
19 including level of effort, and this
20 comprehensive plan will ultimately
21 become part of the result in the
22 contract; personnel, including key
23 personnel. We've deemed that the
24 project manager, lead subject matter
25 expert, exhibit designer, exhibit

1
2 planner, and audiovisual producer are
3 the key personnel, although we're
4 looking for resumes for all others
5 involved in the project. And then we're
6 looking at samples of work.

7 The project requires an intimate
8 knowledge of African American history
9 and culture and experience working with
10 a diverse community representing
11 multiple points of view. Known subject
12 matter experts were listed in the
13 solicitation.

14 We felt by placing special emphasis
15 on the intimate knowledge of history and
16 culture of African descendents we are
17 hopeful to receive proposals which
18 include a diverse team so that the media
19 reaches the widest range of audience for
20 the interpretive media.

21 Once proposals are received, we'll
22 convene a technical evaluation panel.
23 Our panel will consist of five
24 individuals who are qualified in the
25 different backgrounds of interpretive

1
2 media, and there will be a panel
3 chairperson on that also.

4 When the evaluation is completed a
5 competitive range will be determined by
6 the contracting officer, and our
7 competitive range is simply those firms
8 who stand the most reasonable chance for
9 contract award. Negotiations may follow
10 with the firms in the competitive range;
11 however, the government does reserve the
12 right to award without discussion. And
13 based -- the award without discussion
14 would be based on us receiving the most
15 economic best value proposal at the time
16 of submission.

17 Contract award will be made to the
18 firm whose proposal's most advantageous
19 to the government in terms of the
20 established evaluation criteria, price
21 and other factors.

22 Price will be a factor in the award
23 determination, although award may not
24 necessarily be made to the contractor or
25 the firm offering the lowest price.

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Once the contract is awarded Krista Kovach, an exhibit planner, she'll manage the contract, and we'll (will) work closely with Ms. Morrison, the advisor group, the successful contractor and with the A & E contractor that Dave Thomas and his group are working with.

In conclusion, I'd just like to state that any statements or any discussions here today does not amend my solicitation either, just like Dave said. It doesn't amend it or alter any of the terms and conditions. Should we find the need to do that what we'll do is issue an amendment that establishes what the changes to the terms and conditions and things are.

Thank you.

MS. MORRISON: The concluding portion of our presentation tonight will focus on the process and the opportunity for public input and civic engagement during the development of the Interpretive Center, and we hope to

1
2 include a summary of the scheduling --
3 the process in the next African Burial
4 Ground newsletter.

5 The interpretive media process
6 includes three vital steps to develop a
7 design of the exhibit and audiovisual
8 productions.

9 The first is a schematic design
10 proposal, and that is where media
11 planners and the designers and their
12 team distill the researched information,
13 the interpretive stories and the many
14 content ideas into defined messages that
15 can easily be understood in exhibits and
16 audiovisual productions. Three distinct
17 alternatives will describe three
18 different ways to organize the
19 information, and each will have its own
20 emphasis and approach for communicating
21 the content. A few illustrations will
22 represent each alternative, and this is
23 just the beginning of the design
24 process.

25 The schematic design proposal will

1
2 be presented to the public in an open
3 house which is tentatively scheduled for
4 August 18th and 19th of this year, 2006.

5 The next phase of the process is
6 the concept plan. In the concept plan
7 the chosen alternative from the
8 schematic proposal is developed so that
9 we can visualize the exhibit elements.
10 Images, artifacts, graphics,
11 interactives and audiovisual elements
12 are grouped according to the exhibits
13 that they will become part of. The
14 graphic design style is set, including
15 colors, typefaces and repeating graphic
16 elements. This is often an exciting
17 phase as the exhibits begin to take
18 shape.

19 The concept plan will be presented
20 during an open house for the public
21 which is tentatively scheduled for
22 January 19th and 20th of 2007.

23 The final phase, the last phase, is
24 the final plan. At this stage we see
25 the drawings that the exhibits will be

1
2 built from. The text and graphics
3 become final. The dimensions of each
4 element are solidified. The final plan
5 includes everything that is needed to
6 produce the interpretive media. It is
7 the last review before we start cutting
8 the wood, printing the graphics and
9 actually building the exhibits. This
10 final plan will be presented in an open
11 house for the public expected to be
12 around April 6th and 7th of 2007.

13 In addition to the open houses for
14 the public there will be two stages of
15 audience evaluation used to develop the
16 exhibits. The location and methods of
17 these evaluations will be determined in
18 conjunction with the tentative media
19 contractor.

20 Front end evaluation gathers input
21 from the public, including school
22 children, residents and visitors. Front
23 end evaluation will be conducted during
24 the beginning of the project when theme,
25 story lines and program ideas are being

1
2 developed. Front end evaluation
3 concentrates on getting input from
4 potential visitors by means of
5 interviews and/or focus groups to find
6 out what kinds of information they need
7 and would like to know and how this
8 information could be presented in a
9 meaningful, interesting and cost
10 effective way.

11 Misconceptions about the subjects
12 matter are also revealed at this stage,
13 often leading to specific content and
14 presentation elements designed to
15 counter them. This information is used
16 to influence the development of the
17 schematic proposal.

18 The second phase, the formative
19 evaluation, is conducted before the
20 final design plan of interpretive media
21 when mock-up testing can be carried out.
22 Specific exhibit elements will be
23 prototyped and tested with various
24 audience. Formative evaluation is
25 intended to catch design and/or content

1
2 problems before they become a part of
3 the final interpretive media when they
4 are often difficult and expensive to
5 fix. It also verifies the successful
6 exhibit components.

7 The Interpretive Center is
8 scheduled to open in February of 2008.
9 We hope, as we have outlined, that you
10 will join us in this most important
11 task. The opportunity for public input
12 will be announced again as the time
13 approaches, and hopefully if you're not
14 already on the mailing list you've
15 signed in on the sign-in sheet so we can
16 add you to the list and keep you
17 informed when these opportunities come
18 up. Our team will also keep folks
19 informed via the African Burial Ground
20 newsletter and e-mail blasts using our
21 mailing list.

22 Again, we want to thank you for
23 your participation. I know many -- we
24 had a session this afternoon, but at
25 this evening meeting I think many people

1
2 have been involved and worked with the
3 project for many years, and we know that
4 it's been a long time coming to see
5 something develop. And so we're pleased
6 and proud to be a part of that and hope
7 that you all will continue to come out
8 and provide input as we go through these
9 next two years of developing the
10 Interpretive Center.

11 And at this time we'll open it up
12 to questions on the two requests for
13 proposals that are available, and I'll
14 facilitate that portion and direct the
15 question to the most appropriate person
16 to answer.

17 Yes, sir.

18 AUDIENCE MEMBER: Is there an
19 anticipated cost for the Interpretive
20 Center as yet?

21 MS. STRITE: You know, we got it
22 estimated that it's between \$550 and
23 \$595 per square foot, and it's 2,550
24 square foot.

25 MS. MORRISON: But the entire

1

2 project budget is \$5.2 million.

3

MS. STRITE: Correct.

4

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Thank you.

5

MS. MORRISON: Other questions?

6

Yes, sir.

7

AUDIENCE MEMBER: I would like to

8

know first who -- how is this committee

9

comprised? Who designed this -- how was

10

the design of the center brought about?

11

MR. THOMAS: The design hasn't been

12

finalized yet. We have that up to 8,780

13

square foot that we're going to use for

14

the design.

15

That's part of my contract is to

16

select the most highly qualified design

17

firm to work with the interpretive

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contractor to make sure that those

19

exhibits are placed and -- I'm sorry?

20

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Can you --

21

MR. THOMAS: I guess I should start

22

that over.

23

That's my portion of the contract

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is the award of the architectural and

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engineering firm, which we're going to

1
2 be selecting a most highly qualified
3 firm that submits on the project to work
4 with the Interpretive Center on
5 designing and placing the exhibits
6 within that maximum of 8,780 square foot
7 of the first floor of the building here.

8 The design hasn't been finalized
9 yet. The interpretive contractor and
10 the AE will work closely together, and
11 the public will be involved in those
12 meetings to -- to have that input.

13 AUDIENCE MEMBER: One of my
14 concerns I have is to make sure that we
15 have a broad base and truly reflective
16 exhibit there. Because as we all know,
17 at least most of us should know, is that
18 history has been grossly misinterpreted,
19 and I would hope that the center
20 objectively and honestly display things
21 so that children can and adults can
22 unlearn the miseducation and then go
23 forward. That's a critical importance
24 because there was a lot of issues raised
25 just in trying to preserve this center.

1

2 So we don't need to have something
3 circumvent and not put an appropriate
4 center downstairs.

5 MR. THOMAS: I agree, I agree. And
6 I think that's the goal of the entire
7 team that's on the project.

8 AUDIENCE MEMBER: That's what my
9 question was, how committed is the
10 entire team to doing that?

11 MR. THOMAS: The team is very
12 committed to having a successful project
13 with this.

14 AUDIENCE MEMBER: I guess I would
15 question, and nothing about you guys,
16 but how did Denver get involved with
17 this?

18 MR. THOMAS: Well, Denver, and for
19 lack of a better word, is kind of a
20 headquarters for design contracting,
21 architect and engineering for the
22 National Park Service. This project was
23 earned over to the National Park Service
24 and that --

25 AUDIENCE MEMBER: Which is a good

1

2 thing.

3 MR. THOMAS: Which falls to Denver.

4 MS. MORRISON: Yes.

5 AUDIENCE MEMBER: Okay. It's just

6 that you're the headquarters.

7 MS. MOERY: May I add something?

8 Just to -- I'm working to help manage

9 the architectural contract, but Dave

10 said, I want to make sure it's clear,

11 one of the selecting criteria that's

12 really important is that the firms have

13 to be licensed in New York. So even

14 though we're in Denver we'll be managing

15 it in New York. And, again, the firm

16 has to be licensed in New York is one of

17 the criteria.

18 AUDIENCE MEMBER: I would want --

19 not that you would not have that

20 ability, but you're in Denver. How do

21 you look at New York firms with a good

22 critical eye? Do you know what I'm

23 saying?

24 MR. THOMAS: Again, the selection

25 of the most highly qualified firm is

1
2 based on their submission and selection
3 criteria.

4 In that pre-solicitation notice it
5 asks five specific questions to -- that
6 the select -- that the firms that are
7 submitting on the contract to -- that
8 they have to answer, and that's what
9 they're graded on or evaluated on. And
10 our --

11 AUDIENCE MEMBER: I'm sorry. But
12 who -- how do those questions arise from
13 Denver or from some New York --

14 MR. THOMAS: That was a team
15 effort. Those questions came as a team
16 from -- the Denver Service Center has
17 very qualified architects, engineering,
18 structural and the question came from a
19 collection of those qualified
20 professionals that gave the input on how
21 we get to the highest qualified firm.

22 AUDIENCE MEMBER: I guess my
23 concern -- I'm sorry to take up this
24 space.

25 MR. THOMAS: No, go ahead.

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AUDIENCE MEMBER: To really have the culture of what we're trying to show here, I mean, I'm sure you are very well-qualified, but is there not anybody that you could solicit from a New York, you know, entity?

MS. MORRISON: Well, I don't know if this is the answer, if this will directly answer your question, but this Denver office handles projects all across the country for the National Park Service. And the National Park Service is responsible for the development of the Interpretive Center, for handling the contracting and managing that project.

But in the -- in the evaluation team and -- we'll also have working with on both components of the project and throughout the entire project is a group of advisors who are professionals of African descent, some from New York, some not from New York, but all who have been involved in this project at various

1
2 times throughout the history. So that's
3 --

4 AUDIENCE MEMBER: Thank you.

5 MS. MORRISON: -- one component
6 that wasn't mentioned.

7 Yes, ma'am.

8 AUDIENCE MEMBER: Yes. Getting
9 back to this gentleman's question, maybe
10 you kind of answered in terms of the
11 interpretive part, the professionals
12 that you have, these are people from
13 academia? These are government people?
14 I mean, who's going to make the
15 determination on the content?

16 MS. MORRISON: Well, the
17 determination of the content will --
18 well, the first phase is the
19 interpretive media contractor, the team
20 that selected to develop the media, and
21 Kim Strite in her presentation mentioned
22 that the request for proposals we
23 included subject matter experts. And
24 the subject matter experts that we
25 listed in the request for proposals are

1

2 Dr. Sheryl (Sherrill) Wilson --

3

4 AUDIENCE MEMBER: So there is a
5 list of people, the interpretive people,
6 who are supposed to work with --

7

8 MS. MORRISON: Not supposed, but we

9

10 inform them.

11

12 MS. STRITE: It's recommended that

13

14 they work with them.

15

16 AUDIENCE MEMBER: All right, all

17

18 right.

19

20 MS. MORRISON: Just the other two

21

22 Dr. Edna Medford and Dr. Jean Howson,

23

24 so.

25

One second, sir. Dave, did you

have --

MR. AITKEN: I just wanted to make

a comment about the architectural and

engineering firm.

The intention of putting out the

RFP from a small business standpoint was

intended to solicit a New York City --

hopefully we'll get a New York City firm

that can bring all that to bear, as you

mentioned the New York City culture, the

1
2 African culture. That was the intent of
3 putting out the RFP in lieu of using one
4 of our indefinite quantities contract
5 out in Denver.

6 So we're trying to get the local
7 flavor here by having that architectural
8 engineering firm. Now, that isn't to
9 say that's who we're going to get, but
10 that's who we're hoping to get and
11 solicit through this process.

12 AUDIENCE MEMBER: As far as the
13 interpretation what role will the
14 Schoenberg (Schomburg) Center by culture play in
15 this, which has a very major role in
16 interpreting the Africans and the -- in
17 the metropolitan area?

18 MS. MORRISON: Well, at this point
19 there's two things that I can say, the
20 Schoenberg (Schomburg) Center is certainly managing
21 the Office of Public Education and
22 Interpretation, so that's a role that's
23 there. And speaking on behalf of the --
24 a person who's working on the team for
25 the National Park Service, I can see our

1
2 wanting to have a cooperative
3 relationship with the Schoenberg ([Schomburg](#))
4 long-term to work on the interpretation
5 providing information to the public.
6 Things of that nature.

7 I don't know if anybody else wants
8 to add anything to that.

9 AUDIENCE MEMBER: Could you talk
10 about -- now that you brought up the
11 Schoenberg ([Schomburg](#)), would you bring up the
12 interconnection? You said they were
13 doing something.

14 MS. MORRISON: Right. And, Mark,
15 maybe I'll defer to you on this. And
16 Mark Dremel is the project manager with
17 GSA.

18 MR. DREMEL: Obviously I think we
19 all know that Schoenberg ([Schomburg](#)) Center has been
20 a tremendous resource helping GSA,
21 helping, you know, where we are today
22 with Park Service. You know, even with
23 the memorial. They have been
24 tremendously helpful in a lot of
25 activities.

1
2 We have brought the Schoenberg (Schomburg)
3 Center on board to help manage and
4 operate and run the Office of Public
5 Education and Interpretation.

6 Obviously there's a point of
7 transitioning that's happening now,
8 which GSA is transitioning this project
9 to the Park Service. The future of the
10 Schoenberg (Schomburg) Center is also something
11 influx too and it could be potentially
12 transitioning of that regard what their
13 role is.

14 And, you know, the Schoenberg (Schomburg)
15 Center clearly probably is one of the
16 firms or organizations that have really
17 helped and understand the burial ground,
18 the history, and they have been, you
19 know, constantly helping us. So they
20 are a resource to GSA, and I know with
21 the transitioning they will continue be
22 a resource with the National Park
23 Service as well.

24 AUDIENCE MEMBER: But I guess the
25 interpretive design is going to be one,

1
2 and that's going to be like a permanent
3 thing, are you saying that the
4 Schoenberg ([Schomburg](#)) will then have ongoing
5 programs that supplement? I'm not clear
6 there.

7 MR. DREMEL: One thing is very
8 clear, and it's definite right now, the
9 entire project from its inception is
10 being archived. It's part of the
11 Federal Government's responsibilities,
12 and the Schoenberg ([Schomburg](#)) Center has been
13 identified as the future archive
14 facility for all that material. That's
15 everything that's been associated to the
16 project. And they will be -- that
17 basically perpetuity of all that
18 material.

19 So they will be involved
20 guaranteed, you know, for the life of
21 all of this going on with the project as
22 the archive facility, as the resource,
23 as the hub of all of the information
24 that's been associated to the project,
25 all the reports, all the documents, all

1
2 the letters, all the correspondence.
3 You know, there is a tremendous amount
4 of wealth of information, and there will
5 be a single point of contact and
6 repository for all information for the
7 future. So they will always be
8 involved.

9 AUDIENCE MEMBER: That doesn't
10 really answer my question. The way
11 museums work in New York you have a
12 permanent display exhibit of something
13 and then there are ongoing programs and
14 lectures and workshops, and I guess what
15 I'm asking is is that going to be part
16 -- is this expected to be part of it?

17 MS. MORRISON: That would be -- the
18 primary responsibilities would be that
19 of the National Park Service, because I
20 hope I mentioned at the beginning of my
21 remarks that on February 27th the
22 African Burial Ground was designated a
23 National Monument which now means it's a
24 unit of the National Park Service.

25 So, as Mark mentioned, we're in

1
2 transition, and the National Park
3 Service will be operating it. The
4 visitor center will be providing those
5 types of programming that you mentioned,
6 but in addition to the role that
7 Schoenberg ([Schomburg](#)) will play as the archival
8 facility, just because of the nature of
9 the Schoenberg's ([Schomburg's](#)) mission and their role
10 in this project from the beginning, I
11 see a natural, cooperative relationship,
12 working relationship with the National
13 Park Service.

14 Yes.

15 AUDIENCE MEMBER: I had an
16 opportunity to read the draft report,
17 and it seemed to be a number of
18 different alternatives for an
19 Interpretive Center. Now, which of
20 these A, B, C, D are we looking at as we
21 are moving forward?

22 Because you're mentioning that it's
23 going to be downstairs, and, if so, is
24 it just in that back area? Because I
25 heard something about 2,000 and 8,000

1
2 square feet so I'm trying to get a
3 little clarity on what are we working
4 from the different alternatives that
5 were in the draft report, if so, which
6 one. And (b) exactly downstairs where
7 in the back part or is it going to --
8 so.

9 MS. MORRISON: Well, the thing that
10 happened prior to the completion of the
11 final report after the draft was
12 released and after the public comment
13 was selected was that there was a
14 designation, so we now -- the whole
15 issue or question of management has been
16 answered by the Presidential
17 Proclamation and by the designation of
18 the site as a National Monument.

19 And in terms of the level of
20 programming and visitor services that
21 were provided, it was very different
22 between A, B, C and D. And, again, it
23 wasn't directly answered, and we're not
24 choosing one of the four because a
25 decision was made and we were given the

1
2 opportunity to develop the Interpretive
3 Center in approximately 8,000 square
4 feet inside of this building 290
5 Broadway.

6 But I would say most closely
7 resembles D. But it's not an exact
8 mirror of D, because in D what you saw
9 is not only of a larger Interpretive
10 Center but also an education center, and
11 what we're focused on is a development
12 of the Interpretive Center.

13 Any other questions?

14 Yes, sir.

15 AUDIENCE MEMBER: Yes. A couple.
16 One, my concern and I believe I sense
17 from the few questions I heard we're all
18 concerned about making sure that this
19 Interpretive Center is truly reflective
20 as it should be for the nature of what
21 it's supposed to represent and not be
22 something second rate. That's one.

23 The second one is then make it
24 available so that because right now the
25 hours of the burial grounds is limited,

1
2 so we can have greater hours and access
3 because there are a number of children
4 and adults of all nationality,
5 ethnicity, etc. that can't come here
6 during the week. We need weekend hours.
7 We need to have that to be worked into
8 the plan so that it can truly be a
9 broad-based educational availability for
10 us, us meaning the general population.

11 MS. MORRISON: Well, two things,
12 one is an they both relate to the draft
13 management plan, but in preparation of
14 that plan we reviewed most of the work
15 that had been done in the past and all
16 of the public input that had been
17 provided and just also our own
18 understanding of the importance of
19 telling the story accurately and
20 honestly.

21 AUDIENCE MEMBER: Right.

22 MS. MORRISON: And hopefully that's
23 reflected in the draft plan.

24 But there's also, as I went through
25 the phases for public involvement, so as

1
2 we're developing the story lines and
3 developing exhibit tickets there's
4 opportunity for the public to come out
5 and review those materials as we're
6 moving forward.

7 And I just lost the second part of
8 your -- oh, seven days a week. That was
9 also addressed in the draft management
10 plan, and from the outset the National
11 Park Service felt very strongly about
12 weekend access. So it is intended that
13 the visitor center will be open on the
14 weekends.

15 AUDIENCE MEMBER: Now, Mr. Thomas
16 said that the design has not been
17 completed yet. When do you anticipate
18 having a completion of the design so
19 that those folks, whoever is going to
20 get the contract, begin to work towards
21 that?

22 MR. THOMAS: As I said, we included
23 a draft schedule for the project in the
24 pre-solicitation notice that the
25 contractors may have taken a look at

1
2 that. And, again, that schedule is an
3 aggressive schedule. But based on that
4 schedule, bear with me just a second, we
5 got 100 percent construction documents
6 finished, and the date we have here is
7 April 22nd of 2007.

8 AUDIENCE MEMBER: No, no. That
9 wasn't my question. My question was,
10 you said that the design was not
11 completed yet, that I thought I
12 understood you to say as a committee
13 we're creating a design for the center.

14 MS. MORRISON: No. I think I
15 understand the question. The selected
16 contractors will develop the design, and
17 so what we're now doing is requesting
18 proposals to review and select
19 contractors who will then develop the
20 design.

21 AUDIENCE MEMBER: Okay.

22 MR. THOMAS: I thought you --

23 AUDIENCE MEMBER: That would be
24 more input from that as we did the
25 burial ground?

1

2 MS. MORRISON: Yes.

3 Any other questions?

4 AUDIENCE MEMBER: Would you have

5 another public forum enough for -- I

6 said we'll be having another public

7 forum, because it seems that this

8 particular forum wasn't advertised

9 enough?

10 Although I did receive the

11 information, I believe that if it was on

12 the radio and more, you know, put out

13 there that you would have had more of a

14 larger turn out, and because what it

15 seems is that you have just a handful of

16 people and most of the handful of people

17 looks like maybe 95 percent of it is

18 really partial and is unfair as far as

19 the African Burial Ground and

20 Interpretive Center that we don't really

21 have input as far as the main people.

22 Now, today they are having a

23 funeral for the Weiss Family in

24 Brooklyn, so a lot of the people who

25 were going to come, you know, Reverend

1
2 Daughtry and some of the other
3 influential people who are really
4 concerned -- well, maybe not the word
5 concerned, more who really started about
6 the African Burial Ground, they should
7 have been here, but because of the death
8 that was in the family of the Weiss
9 Family, you know, from the African
10 Cowboys unfortunately they weren't able
11 to come.

12 So I'm saying that perhaps if it
13 was advertised on each radio station you
14 would have had more people, unless the
15 Parks Department deliberately did not
16 advertise so that the people could not
17 come.

18 I'm not saying that you
19 deliberately did that, okay, but it
20 seems that we only have a handful of
21 people, and although these people here
22 were trying to throw out the questions
23 it sort of to me I'm -- I just came in,
24 okay, but it seems like from my
25 interpretation it's more like let's

1
2 smooth this over, evade half of the
3 questions and sort of dance around a lot
4 of things because you really should have
5 had handouts. What he was saying you
6 should have had handout documentation so
7 they could have taken it to other arenas
8 and called for another public forum so
9 that more people would have come and
10 advertised. That's all I'm saying.

11 I don't know how the other people
12 feel about it. But I'm one of the
13 African Burial Ground volunteers, and I
14 know that you have a lot of people that
15 work down here. And I know if you had
16 actually sent out the word the way it
17 should have been publicized...

18 Downstairs when I came inside the
19 men were mopping the floors. So if
20 someone comes in they actually don't
21 know if there's something going on.
22 They say, okay, it's on the 30th floor.
23 But if somebody comes in the men are
24 downstairs cleaning. There's nothing to
25 substantiate that there's something

1
2 going on on the 30th floor, okay.

3 Since it's starting to be warm
4 maybe you could have had it outside,
5 have something. This is all. I'm just
6 throwing something out there to you.

7 But really you don't have enough
8 people to go back and say 95 percent of
9 the people said this and only
10 five percent disagree. You know, it's
11 like the statistics. You might have ten
12 people, but because statistically you
13 could go back and write this up as
14 95 percent of the people agree and
15 five percent but how many statistically
16 were there. That's all that I'm saying.

17 Because it's very, very unfair for
18 you just to have one on Bowling Green at
19 2:00 to 4:00 and the other one over here
20 and yet it was not really advertised the
21 way it should have been. I don't know
22 how the other people feel about that.

23 MS. MORRISON: Well, we can
24 definitely -- I -- I mean, I appreciate
25 your comments and definitely your

1
2 suggestions. And I'm not sure if you
3 were here when I outlined the
4 opportunity for public input throughout
5 the development of the Interpretive
6 Center, but we can definitely
7 incorporate those ideas and do a better
8 job of advertising the opportunity.

9 But just -- you started your
10 comments with a question asking whether
11 or not there will be another public
12 forum, and at this phase, before the
13 proposals are due, there's not an
14 opportunity for another.

15 But the one thing that I can do,
16 which won't require producing mailing
17 out another notice, is to -- we also
18 utilize the mailing list, e-mail list
19 which is about, I don't know, three to
20 four thousand people, and we can send
21 out another announcement reminding
22 people of this, that this meeting
23 happened, and if anybody has any
24 questions they have the opportunity to
25 call myself or if there are questions

1
2 directly related to the request of
3 proposals they can call the two
4 contracting officers. So those things
5 we can do immediately.

6 AUDIENCE MEMBER: Okay. So will
7 that -- since she has to write it down
8 can I also say from the conversation
9 that you just said will you have a
10 full-page ad in the New York Times or a
11 full-page documentation in the New York
12 Times also as well as the Amsterdam
13 News, the Daily News and the Newsday?

14 MS. MORRISON: I can't commit to
15 all of that right now because of I mean
16 just the -- when we've done
17 advertisements in newspapers before
18 we've done I think Amsterdam News and
19 Daily News definitely. But these are
20 also budgetary considerations, and to
21 have advertisements consistently in many
22 newspapers is something that I can't say
23 today that, yes, we'll absolutely do it.

24 AUDIENCE MEMBER: So what about the
25 radio stations?

1

2 MS. MORRISON: We can definitely do
3 radio.

4 AUDIENCE MEMBER: Is that after or
5 before?

6 MS. MORRISON: After or before...

7 AUDIENCE MEMBER: Like, in other
8 words, today.

9 MS. MORRISON: We did not do radio
10 for today, but for the future.

11 AUDIENCE MEMBER: No, no, no.
12 You're misunderstanding what I'm saying.
13 I'm saying will you be doing it after or
14 before next -- in other words, if you
15 have something that's so pertinent to
16 the community and to the black people at
17 large will you say this today and then
18 tomorrow say, well, oh, I forgot?

19 MS. MORRISON: No, absolutely not.
20 That's one of the reasons for having
21 this recorded by a court reporter.

22 AUDIENCE MEMBER: Okay. Can we get
23 a copy as a member and volunteer of the
24 African Burial Ground? Can we
25 substantiate what you're saying and get

1
2 a copy of this so later on --

3 MS. MORRISON: Well, there's two
4 things.

5 AUDIENCE MEMBER: -- just to be
6 part of our records.

7 MS. MORRISON: It will be posted on
8 two websites, the GSA and African Burial
9 Ground website, and what I didn't
10 mention earlier, we can also make
11 available a copy in the OPEI office.

12 AUDIENCE MEMBER: Okay.

13 AUDIENCE MEMBER: Will that include
14 today's minutes as well?

15 MS. MORRISON: The earlier
16 afternoon?

17 AUDIENCE MEMBER: Yes.

18 MS. MORRISON: Yes.

19 Anything else?

20 AUDIENCE MEMBER: Yes. How much is
21 admission after everything is done? How
22 much will admission be?

23 MS. MORRISON: Oh, there will be no
24 charge.

25 Anything else?

1

2

AUDIENCE MEMBER: What's the final

3

date of everything being --

4

MS. MORRISON: February 2008.

5

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Okay.

6

AUDIENCE MEMBER: It took this long

7

to get to this point.

8

MS. MORRISON: Well, if there are

9

no other questions we'll formerly

10

conclude the meeting, and, again, thank

11

you all for coming out tonight.

12

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Thank you.

13

(TIME NOTED: 8:07 p.m.)

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C E R T I F I C A T E .

STATE OF NEW YORK)

: ss.

COUNTY OF BRONX)

I, NICOLE AMENEIROS, a Notary
Public within and for the State of New
York, do hereby certify that the
foregoing record of proceedings is a
full and correct transcript of the
stenographic notes taken by me therein.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto
set my hand this 20th day of April,
2006.

NICOLE AMENEIROS